First Draft.

PROFILE

CHURCH OF SAINT ALBAN, ROXBOROUGH

April, 1978

THE CHURCH OF SAINT ALBAN
Ridge & Fairthorne Aves.
Philadelphia, Pa. 19128

The Church of St. Alban, affectionately known as "Roxborough's Little Church Around the Corner", is situated in a semi-urban residential neighborhood in northwest Philadelphia. Roxborough has grown into a community where every kind of home can be found - from row (town) houses to single houses to fairly large apartment complexes.

Our parish is 119 years old, with the first services being held in a store in 1859. The present church, a gray stone building, was completed and the first service was conducted in October, 1861. Services have been held here continuously to the present time. The church is a one-story building seating approximately 200 persons. In the undercroft is the fellowship room.

Stained glass windows were given as memorials, and give a warm religious feeling to all who enter to worship.

The pipe organ is of the tracker action type and is loved by all. It is now considered of historic importance and the choirs are embarking on a campaign to have it refurbished. Incidentally, it was installed during the year 1897.

The parish house is also of gray stone, is attached to the church, and contains an auditorium, modern kitchen, lavatories and the Staneruck meeting room. One end of the auditorium may be used as a stage. Two recently completed projects in the Parish house are storm and screen windows, and a new heating plant.

Just in front of the Sacristy entrance will be found St. Alban's Memorial Garden, where the ashes of several former parishioners are buried.

Our Rectory is a frame house containing 4 bedrooms, 1-1/2 baths, study, living room, dining room, and kitchen with porches on the front and back. There is oil hot water heat throughout with an automatic washer and dryer in the basement.

The rectory was built in 1879. A greal deal of refurbishing will be done before the new rector moves in.

St. Alban's was an off-spring of St. David, Manayunk, which is considered to have been the Mother Church.

Over the years we have had a total of sixteen rectors. The Rev. Charles Lyons had the longest period of service - 39½ years. Our present rector, The Rev. Robert H. Stetler, has served at St. Alban's over 33 years.

We consider ourselves Ecumenical because we participate in the 21st Ward Fourth of July parade, and have held community services and hymn sings. FISH (Friends in Supplying Help) is a pet project that we support. The Rector is a member of the 21st Ward Clergy Club.

Recently our first black member was ~~mkm~~ welcomed into the fold, though he had been attending St. Alban's regularly for several years. There is another family that has been attending church and sunday school for about a year; however, they are not members at this time.

For the family of the Rector, St. Alban's is convenient to shopping, with a large supermarket about 1½ blocks away. Then there is a nice shopping center about 3 blocks away with a supermarket, 5 & 10, delicatessen, bakery and many other stores, as well as a theater. A YMCA is just across the street from this center.

There is another shopping center about two miles up the "Ridge", with a department store, theater and many other stores and restaurants - - even a bowling lane.

The nearest elementary school is about a mile up the Ridge, while the Jr.-Sr. High School is about 2 blocks down the Ridge.

A bus that goes directly into center city Philadelphia runs past the rectory.

Our services are 8:30 a.m. Holy Communion and 10:30 a.m. Morning Prayer and Church School. Communion is on the 1st and 3rd Sundays at 10:30 a.m.

During Lent we have Sunday Evening services with guest preachers. At these services we alternate the Litany with Evening Prayer. Then after these services we have coffee hours, which are enjoyed by all. These services are well attended.

On a Sunday near St. Alban's Day we have a Corporate Communion Service for Women and Girls at the 8:30 a.m. service. Then after the service the men of the parish prepare and serve breakfast to the women.

In the fall near St. Andrew's Day we have a Corporate Communion

Service for men and boys, and of course, the women prepare and serve breakfast to the men.

In September just after Labor Day we have a Parish-get-together which is a picnic with games for the church school youngsters and others. The purpose of this is to start our fall and winter program for the church and church school after the summer doldrums.

The Search Committee of St. Alban's prepared a questionnaire that was given to 215 parishioners. Of these, we received back 81 or 38% of the questionnaires.

Persons under the age of 18 were not asked to take part in the survey. Ages of the persons responding were as follows:

18-30 years	7.4%
31-40 years	21%
41-50 years	16%
51-60 years	12%
Over 60 years	38%
Ages unknown	5.6%

Of these persons, 26% are retired.

The congregation is comprised of office workers, blue collar workers, some professionals and business executives, and homemakers.

We are almost 100% in our feelings that St. Alban's is a friendly church - one in which you can feel very comfortable.

We have organizations to appeal to all ages - the Y.P.O., Sewing Guild, Altar Guild, Monday Eves, Jr. Choir, Sr. Choir, Altar Boys, St. Alban's News Staff, and Wattis Group. Our Vestry is an active one, and in addition to its regular duties, holds 2 Social Evenings of Games a year. The proceeds from these provide Christmas and Easter remembrances for our elderly and shut-in, as well as supporting various projects throughout the year.

Our monthly publication, St. Alban's News, is a "newsy" letter that our parishioners look forward to receiving.

The marital status of those persons responding to the questionnaire is as follows:

Single	15%
Married	60%
Separated	1%
Divorced	4%
Widowed	15%
Unknown	5%

Approximately20% live in apartments, while the other 80% live in houses. Seventy% own their homes; the balance rent them.

We have 85 children enrolled in our Sunday School. Most of these are regular attendees.

In response to the question of "How long have you been an Episcopalian?", we learned the following:

Length of time	Men	Women
0 to 10 yrs.	8	4
11 to 20	2	7
21 to 30	4	9
31 to 40	4	9
41 to 50	6	5
51 to 60	12	15
61 to 70	3	5
71 to 80	0	2

Parents of the respondents were Episcopalians as follows:

Husbands -	Mother	30	grandparents	43
	Father	31		
Wives	Mother	24	grandparents	30
	Father	25		

Families have lived in Roxborough for the period of time as follows:

0-10 years	19
11-20	9
21-30	6
31-40	9
41-50	6
51-60	10
61-70	5
90	1
200	1

Those families living outside Roxborough have lived in their

neighborhoods 15 years
17 "
32 "
33 "
36 "
47 "
50 "

We have several families who live in Belmont Hills, one in Lafayette Hills, and 2 in the Erdenheim-Chesnut Hill area. All of these are most regular in attendance.

Fifty six persons said they attend church regularly, while 16 said they do not.

When asked how many times a year they attend church, the following was revealed to us:

0 to 10 times a year	3 persons
11 to 20	3
21 to 30	4
31 to 40	4
41 to 50	10
over 50 times a yr.	27

Of the persons who were polled, almost everyone was in agreement that St. Alban's has all the services that the parishioners want. A few people feel that an adult Bible study group would be worth while.

Reasons given for prefering the 8:30 a.m. service were:

There is no sermon, no noise and more reverence.

I can get a ride to church.

More people my own age go to this service, and we have a breakfast club.

I'm an early riser.

Because it leaves the rest of the day free.

It is a short service and I receive Communion.

It is the short communion service and there is no sermon.

Makes me feel closer to God and I don't like sermons interrupting my communion.

Starts the day off right.

More convenient.

It's short

I can have communion every week.

Reasons for ~~xxxxxxxx~~ attending the 10:30 a.m. service are:

I like the music and a sermon.

Because Sunday School is held at the same time.

8:30 a.m. service is too early.

I've always attended this service.

I like choir music, the lessons, and the sermon.

The only service I can get to.

I come with my child.

I like morning prayer as well as communion: also, a good sermon and good music. I also like to sleep late on Sunday morning.

Having children, we like to attend church together and the children can attend Sunday School at the same time.

Convenient. Only one I can make.

Because of working conditions.

Force of habit.

Reasons given for not attending church regularly were as follows:

My health prevents it.

Bad health and too far to travel.

I travel frequently and do not feel the need.

Not interested.

Laziness.

Due to old age.

Taking care of a bedridden parent.

I work week-ends.

One of our most helpful organizations as far as the financial support of the church is concerned is the Wattis Group. We save labels yaar-round for the Wattis Plan, and with good leadership in our group, and careful management, have managed to earn approximately $1000 a year for our general funds.

Our June Fair is the main Social Event of the year. It is also a financial success, and last year netted over $2,000.00.

Financial Statement

At the present time St. Alban's is in a good financial condition and has managed to keep ahead of inflation. The following information will confirm this.

The congregation is composed of the following families and individuals.

Year	Number of families	Number of Individuals
1977	158	70
1976	148	66
1975	157	65
1974	142	73
1973	155	73

The average attendance on the 4 key sundays for the past five years has been:

Sunday	1978	1977	1976	1975	1974	Average
First Sun. in Lent	97	183	177	150	160	153
Easter Day	249	298	235	254	254	258
Trinity Sunday	-	124	101	103	93	105
First Sun. Advent	-	96	111	102	112	105

During the last five years our receipts and disbursements were:

Year	Receipts	Disburse.	Contributions to Diocese & Missions	Others
1977	$43,200	41,666	$600	$985
1976	36,681	34,640	600	900
1975	40,259	38,011	600	1158
1974	32,484	29,907	625	300
1973	40,234	38,647	600	825

Our Endowments produced income during the last 5 years as follows:

1977	$14,627
1976	15,238
1975	12,771
1974	10,820
1973	11,196
Five year total	$64,652
Average	$12,930

The Altar Guild received income from the Endowment Fund interest each year that covers the expense of permanent flower and candle

memorials throughout the year.

Candy for the church school children each Christmas is purchased with income from the Endowment fund (interest), also.

Conservative estimates of the value of the Church property are:

Buildings - church, rectory & garage	$105,000
Contents of buildings	28,000
Total	$133,000

Perhaps our giving to missions, etc., has not been as large as it could be, but we have managed to be self supporting and whenever a big project comes along, i.e. painting the church interior, renovating the kitchen, storm windows, and furnace, we go to the congregation for help and they always come through with flying colors. As a consequence of this, the Church of St. Alban has no debt.

In this day and age, this is an accomplishment of which we are all very proud.

For the year 1978 we have 145 sets of offering envelopes. Ninety-seven of them are in use regularly, while 21 are used occasionally. The 97 regularly used envelopes are filled as follows:

Amount	Number	Amount	Number
.50	2	5.00	7
1.00	34	6.00	1
2.00	30	10.00	5
3.00	10	15.00	2
4.00	4	20.00	2

The congregation decided several years ago that they preferred to continue using the 1928 Prayer Book, after trying the trial liturgy for the prescribed period of time. The questionnaire showed that the congregation is still overwhelming ly in favor of the 1928 Prayer Book. However, many of us feel that is is now time to try Rite I of the new liturgy.

Conversations with the visiting priests during this Lenten season impressed on us the fact that many of their congregations were using Rite I on an alternating basis at least twice a month.

As a result of this, we will probably try Rite I soon.

A composite of the clergyman that the congregation of St. Alban is looking for is as follows:

An early middle aged person who is experienced in small parish life and will loyally work for and support all of our activities. He will relate everyday problems to the scriptures in, and will deliver, short, interesting and dynamic sermons. A strong belief in tradition while not being opposed to new ideas is essential.

He must be a shepherd who is a friendly, fatherly person that one can talk to and confide in. His caring will include the elderly and the sick. At the same time, he must relate to the younger people (church school and teenage) of the parish.

Leadership in the spiritual life of the parish should be his strongest ability. There is an allegiance to the 1928 Prayer Book at St. Alban's, while we are willing to try Rite I of the new liturgy in the near future.

His parish and its people must be uppermost in his mind, with all interests second. Living in the rectory on the church grounds will tend to strengthen these bonds.

Hopefully he will have a good singing voice and will have hymns, etc., that we know in the services.

The road into the future will no doubt have its obstacles, but a true faith in our heavenly Father and a sense of cooperation will prevail and the parish will prove itself better for having overcome them.

It is the fervent hope of all of us that after a long career at St. Alban's, many of his parishioners will say to the Search Committee, "Get a new priest just like our present one".

If a clergyman can fill most of these characteristics, he will find at St. Alban's a congregation and Vestry that will support him in a lifetime of service to God and His people.